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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMPTROLLER PROPOSES 60% PROPERTY TAX CUT AND \$50 MILLION MORE TO FIX CRUMBLING ROADS AND BRIDGES

The Collins Medicaid Amendment will have a \$203 Million Positive Impact for Erie County Taxpayers

(Buffalo, New York) – Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw has declared a watershed moment for counties across New York State, as landmark federal legislation introduced by Congressman Chris Collins will soon eliminate the most hurtful unfunded mandate imposed by Albany: Medicaid spending.

Launched as the “Mychajliw Taxpayers Protection Plan,” the Erie County Comptroller proposed a massive property tax cut to help families that paid the bill in the first place, as well as smart investments in fixing crumbling roads and bridges across Erie County. Comptroller Mychajliw’s plan gives back most of the estimated \$203 million Erie County will potentially receive in Medicaid mandate relief before the politicians can spend it all.

“The Collins Medicaid Amendment achieves what decades of talk amongst politicians never did; real and actual property tax relief,” said Comptroller Mychajliw.

“I cannot understate the importance of this legislation to taxpayers and our community. This is a game changer for property taxpayers and the county. Unfortunately, those politicians never met a tax dollar they did not like to spend. Before government has a chance to get their hands on \$203 million to spend, we need to commit the long awaited relief on a tax cut and infrastructure repairs,” continued Mychajliw.

The federal amendment, which is now part of congress’s effort to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, requires the State of New York to fully fund the cost of Medicaid. New York is one of the few states in the nation that forces most of its counties to pay a big portion of the Medicaid bill, while at the same time giving local taxpayers no say whatsoever in how that money is spent.

“Despite having full control over the costs associated with Medicaid, the State forced counties and local taxpayers to fund the entire bill. In Erie County, this bill is more than \$203 million per year,” added Comptroller Mychajliw.

The unfunded mandate, the Medicaid bill, has long been a source of contention in Erie County. Over the past decade, the unfunded State mandate of paying for Medicaid has averaged over 95% of our property tax revenue.

“To put that in perspective, 95% of every dime taxpayers pay in county property taxes has gone to cover a bill that was always supposed to be paid for by the state. This amendment relieves us of that back breaking burden. It gives us the opportunity to invest that money more wisely and return the majority of it back to taxpayers,” said Comptroller Mychajliw.

If the bill passes in Congress as expected on Thursday, March 23rd, 2017, Comptroller Mychajliw will recommend that 75% of the savings, which will total more than \$150 million, be returned to taxpayers in the form of a property tax cut.

An average homeowner would see their county property tax bill reduced by more than 60%, meaning hundreds of dollars a year back in their pockets. The impact will be significantly greater for small businesses and the area's employers.

Comptroller Mychajliw proposes directing the remaining 25%, approximately \$50 million in annual revenue, be directed toward fixing Erie County's crumbling infrastructure. This would increase annual road, bridge and infrastructure spending from \$36.4 million to \$87.5 million.

"I believe this bill will pass. It already has bi-partisan support at the local and federal levels. When it passes, Erie County taxpayers will become the recipient of a \$203 million annual windfall. I want to make sure families feel the benefit at home before politicians get their hands on spending the money. I am out first, front and center, to let taxpayers know that I am leading a charge to give their money back to them," said Comptroller Mychajliw.

"I will make it my mission to ensure that this money is not somehow squandered back into pet projects for politicians and typical wasteful spending," the Comptroller concluded.

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